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No. 8 November 1977

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IN THIS ISSUE

- 5. Bushwalker's delight
- 9. Fishy friends
- 13. Amelia - the jigsaw is falling into place
- 18. Tapini
- 21. Yumi go Nago
- 23. Bensbach
- 26. Polished brass
- 29. Dance of the sea eagles
- 33. Potters of Bilibil



Welcome aboard

November 1 marks the beginning of the domestic jet age in Papua New Guinea. We've had jets, of course, calling into Port Moresby for several years but the brunt of domestic second level travel has been borne by turbo prop Fokker Friendship F27s with invaluable assistance until recently from those old workhorses of the air, the DC3s, the commercial equivalents of military C47s.

Sadly, the DC3s have outflown their usefulness, the final eight having been withdrawn from service on August 1. But with the passing of this valiant aircraft, which first flew well before the Pacific War, we can look forward to faster - and more - services within Papua New Guinea. In mid-September this year the Papua New Guinea Cabinet approved the purchase of two pure jet Fokker Fellowship F28s. Initially the F28s will service Port Moresby, Lae (from the newly opened Nadzab Airport in the Markham Valley outside of Lae), Madang, Wewak, Manus, Kavieng and Kieta. The introduction of the F28s will enable us to widen our services throughout the country - a development which is vital if we are to cope with a rapidly growing passenger demand created both by an increasing number of visitors to Papua New Guinea and by our own people who, for many years, have displayed a desire to travel within their own country.

An added bonus with the introduction of the F28s is the upgrading of our Port Moresby-Cairns and Port Moresby-Honiara services to jet status, a move we feel has long been desirable.

C.B. Grey
General Manager

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COVER

Few hang around to appreciate the beauty of the sea urchin. Bob Halstead did, in only two metres of water near Kapa Kapa, an hour's drive from Port Moresby. Bob and wife Dinah have now started a company, named Tropical Diving Adventures, specialising in diving instruction and underwater photography. In this issue he takes us down to meet some of the fishy friends he has made in his years in Papua New Guinea.

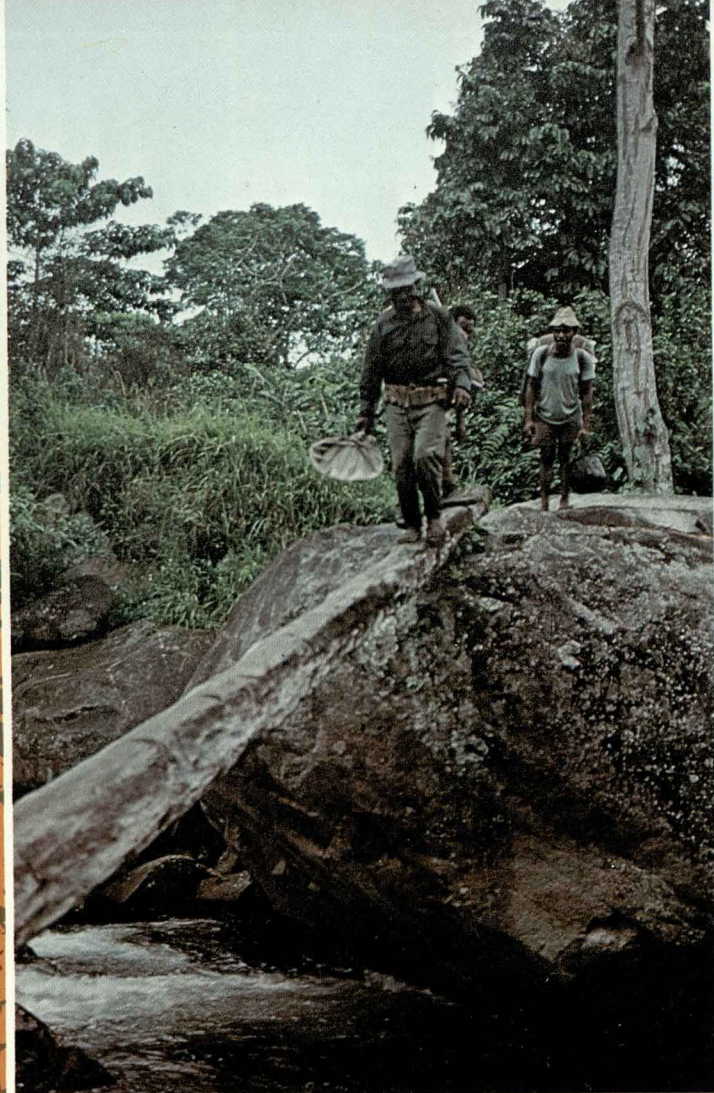


SP

**All the best
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Right: On the Lower Bulldog trail in Morobe Province; below: *Rhododendron aurigeranum* at 1100 metres near Wau, Morobe Province



Bushwalker's Delight

By John Yost

For the adventurer and the fit outdoorsman, Papua New Guinea has the lot. Every mountain range, the entire coastline, and each island beckons one to explore. Because of its extreme topography and vegetation, the country abounds in wilderness areas, some well-known, some unknown. Using the roadheads and airstrips that have made most regions accessible as operating bases, innumerable interesting treks are possible.

I came to Papua New Guinea to find some of the hidden corners for myself. I climbed Mount Wilhelm and Mount Giluwe, the two highest peaks in Papua New Guinea; I walked from Salamaua to Wau, and on across the Bulldog Road from

Wau to Kokoro; I spent a few days exploring Manam Island, an active volcano off the coast north of Madang; and finally I hiked the famous Kokoda Trail.

Some of these adventures were difficult, even dangerous. Others were more straightforward. All were great fun. The magnificent flora and fauna, the sidelight of war memories along various tracks, the contacts with fascinating and hospitable people, and the variety of extraordinary panoramas highlighted the walks.

The mention of the fit and adventurous at the beginning of the article is an intentional warning. For the casual wanderer, bushwalking in Papua New Guinea may be too

demanding. Some walks are of course much more difficult than others. I would divide the trek possibilities into three different levels: the adventure, the hard trail and the path walk. Something to appeal to every outdoors-orientated person is available within these bushwalking categories.

My two trips in the Wau area of the Morobe Province fall into the first category. The criteria that set these walks apart are the state of disrepair of the trails due to lack of use, the density of the vegetation growing over the trails, and the lack of information readily available on them. Maps can be deceptive. On my chart, the route from Salamaua to Wau looked easy, and the Bulldog



From left to right: from the top of the Daulo Pass, Eastern Highlands Province, highest point on the Highlands Highway; the going can be tough through highland grasslands; a bonus for early risers, sunrise just out of Mount Hagen, Western Highlands Province; below: rope bridge over the Upper Sepik River on the way to Feramine, East Sepik Province

Road, having been at one time a real road, seemed even easier. In reality, little red lines on maps tend to erode, become plant-infested, disappear, and intertwine misleadingly with other local tracks. They can be a challenge to follow.

The trail from Salamaua to Wau is a study in contrasts, exemplifying many of the attractions and drawbacks of wilderness trekking. A walk along idyllic beach-and-palm coastline quickly turns into a slog through muddy quagmire when the trail goes inland up a river valley.

Leaving the river, an extremely steep uphill incline through dense man-high *kunai* grass leads into the mountain rainforest. The trail winds up and down across and along mountain streams, high onto a mountainside — where one picks one's way along cliff edges and across rockslides — and eventually into the rolling hills of the Wau valley. It is a fascinating three-day walk, but the quality of the track is so poor as to be at times dangerous.

The Bulldog Road, a classic mountain and jungle track, has a

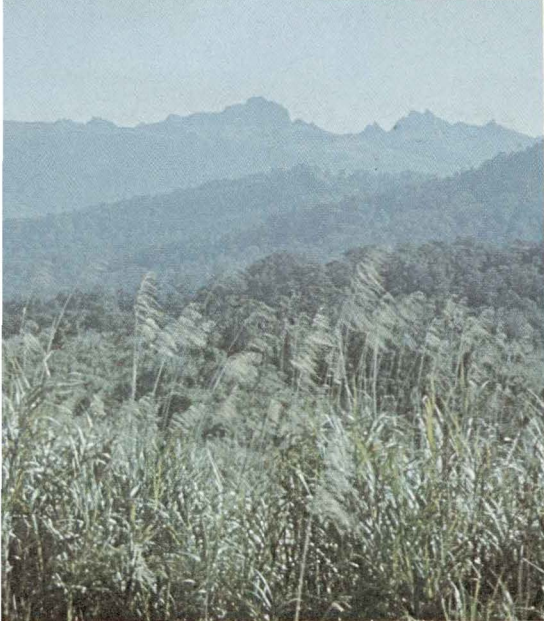
similar drawback. After passing the high point on the road 16 kilometres from Edie Creek, the track deteriorates almost completely and it becomes difficult to continue on. On these and any other tracks not commonly walked by the local people or by other bushwalkers, I strongly advise hiring a guide. This simple act can prevent frustrating, energy-consuming and often dangerous meanders off the correct trail. And the guide's machete will always make the going appreciably smoother.

The 'hard trail' category is of wider appeal since it does not require fighting the jungle and the trail to get to the other end. Hikes up Mounts Wilhelm and Giluwe and along the Kokoda Trail reveal stunningly beautiful views. These paths are regularly used and maintained. There are shelters along the way and rest houses in the villages for over-nighting. Information on distances and problems is available. These more commonly hiked routes allow the outdoorsman to penetrate the forest wilderness or scale the

heights of mountains without taking the risks of an expedition into little-known backwoods.

However, these treks must still be taken seriously. The steepness of the gradients and the obstacles posed by the terrain make good physical condition essential. The rigors of altitude demand fitness when venturing into the high mountains. Guides are always useful, but not absolutely necessary if sufficient caution is exercised. The 'hard trails' are not for everyone; bush experience and sound health are limiting factors not to be overlooked.

Many parts of Papua New Guinea have well-defined trail systems used by the local people. In out-of-the-way places these can open the way to unexpected delights of landscape and rewarding encounters with the people. For me, Manam Island was a 'path walk' of this type. The many villages and high quality connecting tracks make for relaxed walking, yet the smouldering volcano looming overhead, the harsh and forbidding lava flows and outcrops, and the lush tropical vegetation



combine to create a uniquely exciting experience. 'Path walk' does not imply the ordinary. It is simply a term for a less physically demanding aspect of exploring this country's natural wonders.

Papua New Guinea's varied remotenesses mean a chance to choose your own special place. Detailed maps show hundreds of potential challenging treks into scarcely touched countryside, and less complicated and exhausting outings into the unusual. Listen to people talking, ask about intriguing prospects, gather information and set off on a surprising journey into the wild. And always remember that fortitude, caution and plenty of local advice all help overcome the ruggedness you will encounter. — *John Yost is an expedition leader for commercial tourist groups and has also made exploratory trips in Ethiopia and Alaska.*



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Feeble swimmers and easy to catch, puffer fish, in this case Arothron nigropunctatus, gulp down water making an imposing sight for would-be predators



Fishy friends

Story and photographs: Bob Halstead

Make friends with a fish! These fascinating fellows are finning about beneath the waves just waiting for you to glub "Hello". Being not quite as advanced as man technologically, the fish is limited to its watery world. However we, with SCUBA tank, mask and flippers, are

now easily able to swim under water for hours at a time. So it's up to us to make the effort and get down there with them.

Unfortunately, man's usual experience with fish extends to food, perhaps fear, but not friendship. Of course, fish are marvellous eating.

But knowing that cows and chickens are good to eat doesn't stop us from admiring and protecting horses or birds of paradise! Fish have been very neglected and to most people there are only three kinds: the good eating kind, the bad eating kind and the dangerous kind. In fact, fish are



of all kinds — handsome, pretty, ugly, smart, dumb, fat, thin, kind, mean . . .

The history of diving reveals an emphasis similar to that shown in other areas opened to modern man for the first time; that of exploitation rather than study and development. SCUBA divers invented powerful spear guns and found that shooting fish was an easy way to get a good meal. Spearfishing was encouraged as a sport and the numbers of fish on easily accessible reefs declined rapidly. This has happened to such an extent that in some parts of the world big fish are a very rare occurrence.

But times and tides are changing. Now, for every diver intent on getting a meal there is another with a desire to watch and learn. Famous divers Hans Hass and Jacques Cousteau, closely involved in spearfishing in their early years, are now actively campaigning against it and encouraging more constructive projects. Indeed, spearfishing while using SCUBA is now illegal in many parts of the world and has been said to be as 'sporting' as 'shooting a cow in a field with a machine gun'.

The problem is not usually one of overfishing although that can happen. Commercial and line fishermen remove far more fish from the sea than spearfishermen ever could. What spearfishing does is radically change the behaviour of fish when confronted by a diver.

It is natural that fish, which daily cope with the eat and be eaten life of the oceans, learn rapidly when danger is near them. They feel the vibrations of the hunter and flee

to the safety of their coral caverns in the reef making the underwater landscape appear barren and uninhabited.

Most people, whose experience of a large live fish would be limited to one helplessly flapping on a boat or beach, would not credit them with this intelligence. But intelligent they are.

Steve Klem, a diving tour operator in Florida in the United States, has spent many hours taming fish. Now he can feed, stroke and play games with his many friends on the reef. But if a spearfisherman enters the water — even out of Steve's sight — the fish immediately disappear and only reappear after the intruder leaves the water.

Not only are they intelligent. They all have their own personalities and habits. Some rush to the surface to guide you down to the reef. Some like having their tummies rubbed or tickled — and let you know, with a satisfied grunt, how much they enjoy it. Some rub against you like a cat, eager for affection.

Fish can be some of the easiest of wild animals to tame. On many of Papua New Guinea's more isolated reefs, where the fish would never have met a diver before, a newcomer will quickly find himself surrounded by curious observers. The task of making friends is already half done. A few tasty morsels spread into the water and the small guy will approach and enjoy a free meal.

By returning regularly to the same reef area, soon all the community will recognise you as a friend and approach for their share.

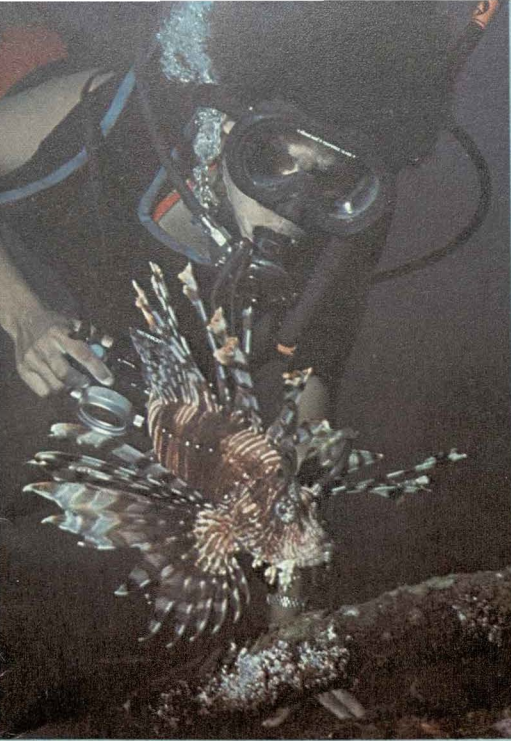
Clockwise from above left: Kevin Balch plays with a trumpet fish (*Aulostomus chinensis*) on a night dive in Madang; spiked puffer (*Diadon maculifer*); Dinah Halstead meets *Pterois volitans*, a lionfish with an impressive array of poisonous spines; the anemone fish (*Amphiprion percula*) spends all its time looking after the anemone; the wobbegong shark (*Eucrossorhinus dasypogon*), a lazy fellow, spends most of its time sleeping under coral ledges; the leatherjacket (*Osbeckia scripta*) has a splendid and durable suit which it loves to show off to admirers

Some species require more patience than others but after a while it will not matter if you don't bring food — they just enjoy your company.

Reef fish make permanent homes in the coral and stay in the same area all their lives. These differ from pelagic fish such as tuna and mackerel which freely roam the oceans. The pelagics, or open sea fish, which are very important commercially, are difficult to tame because you rarely meet the same fish twice. But by revisiting a certain area of reef, you will meet time and again the same fish and get to know them as individuals.

One quality vital when training fish is the diver's rapport with the ocean. He must swim and breathe with ease, control, and grace. He must believe that the ocean is a friendly place and that he is not about to meet his doom through some terror of the deep lurking behind the next coral head.

Unfortunately, there is a lot of money to be made in dramatising the dangers of the ocean world. The 'Jaws' syndrome has surged to every shore so that today folks have been made to fear something with less



danger than taking a shower. Divers are to blame as well, describing to their awestruck admirers the narrow escapes, usually from huge sharks, snakes or moray eels, that they have just braved. There is an old gag that is worth remembering when hearing these stories: 'How do you know when a diver is lying?' — 'When he opens his mouth!'

Most of the attacks that take place under water are by divers on sea creatures. Imagine a moray eel peacefully resting inside his coral home when a great hand comes groping through his front door. If you had teeth as efficient as a moray's what would you do? Or a stonefish waiting, frozen, for its dinner to swim by when a huge foot descends on his back. If you couldn't do something about that you would not last very long. And

the shark's job of cleaning up the ocean of sick and wounded fish makes him ideally trained to compete with a spear fisherman for his catch.

I know of no reliable reported 'attack' on a diver swimming peacefully under water and not interfering with the rights of the natural inhabitants.

In man's history, fear of the unknown has always been transformed into fear of some imagined devil. And this is true of people's fear of the ocean. Today, however, with education available to the budding diver, knowledge and understanding can replace these fears and make the reefs a safe and fun place to be.

Divers are waiting to develop these by training the fish, thus ensuring the visitor of a friendly

welcome. Diver Kevin Baldwin of Madang has already started and has a couple of dive sites to which he will not take SCUBA spear fishermen and which are too deep for traditional skin diving local fishermen.

There, divers can marvel at the multitudes of superbly shaped and coloured varieties of fish and take away with them not fish fillets but memories of some exciting minutes when they were privileged to meet some of the world's most amiable personalities. — *Bob Halstead is a SCUBA instructor for Tropical Diving Adventures of Port Moresby.*



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Amelia~the jigsaw is falling into place

By Terry Gwynn-Jones.

'We are in a line of position 157-337. Will repeat this message on 6210. We are running north and south. We have only a half hour's fuel left and cannot see land.'

The message blasted through loud and clear over the radio of the United States Coast Guard ship *Itasca*. The woman's voice betrayed anxiety. Quickly the operator switched to the 6210 kilocycle band and waited for her call. It never came. Her silence was shrouded by the crackling of static interference out over the vast Pacific Ocean.

Amelia Earhart, darling of American aviation, was missing. The mystery and a long fruitless search had begun. Today, nearly 40 years after her final take off - from the airfield in Papua New Guinea's Morobe Province - the mystery has still to be solved. For one man at least the search goes on. Captain Elgin Long, skipper of an Oakland, California, based Flying Tiger Airlines cargo jet, believes he knows how to find Amelia Earhart's missing Lockheed Electra. If he can get the support, he plans to mount a huge search for the remains of the missing aircraft.

For 39 years, hundreds of rumours and theories - some practical but most the products of over-fertile imaginations - have kept alive the memories of Earhart and her navigator, Fred Noonan, for millions of Americans. To US aviation buffs she is still 'Amelia' and they talk about her as though she only went missing yesterday.

Captain Long returned to his home near San Francisco earlier this year after months of research in Australia and Papua New Guinea. He tracked down dozens of people who had personal contact with Amelia Earhart when she passed through Darwin and Lae just before she went missing. 'I am having a lot of success in my investigations,' he said after his return to the US.

He dismisses a popular theory that Earhart and Noonan were on a spy flight for the US government and were captured by the Japanese. 'I can find no direct evidence that she was involved in any type of espionage flight. I have no doubt that their loss was due to a small navigational error on the long over-water flight to Howland Island. There is plenty of evidence that they were very close to the island when they ran out of fuel,' he says.

Amelia Earhart, Long believes, was attempting to involve women in aviation on an equal basis with men. 'She was ahead of her time in that she felt that a woman who had the mental and physical capabilities should be able to compete with men in any field on an equal basis. That doesn't sound too wild an idea today but you should have tried it on for size 40 years ago. She received a lot of adverse comment from the press over her "revolutionary ideas".'

If any one man is ideally equipped to solve the mystery it is Long. Besides his qualifications as a trans-continental pilot he also has a navigator's licence and is a US Federal Aviation Authority trained air crash investigator, a combination of skills suited to the task he has set himself.

He first got the idea only six years after the pair vanished when, as a wartime pilot, he flew over Howland Island in 1943.

To fully understand the problems facing Long, it is necessary to view the circumstances surrounding Earhart's final flight.

The 39 year old pilot took off from Oakland, California on June 1, 1937 on what she reported was to be her last record flight. Slim, almost boyish, reminding one of Katherine Hepburn, Amelia Earhart had been setting records for 10 years.

In 1932 she had set a solo record for the Atlantic crossing and earned the nickname of 'Lady Lindy'. A year later she married New York publishing magnate G.P. Putnam.

A university graduate, Earhart spoke five languages. When not flying she spent most of her time on welfare work in the Boston slums. Never satisfied with her records, she was always planning something greater. This was to be it - the ultimate in long distance flying. She wanted to be the first woman to fly around the world.

Navigator Fred Noonan, senior navigator of Pan American World Airlines, was considered as good as any in the United States. He had already crossed the Pacific 18 times, directing the flight of the company's famed *China Clipper*. Their aircraft, a twin-engined Lockheed Electra, fast and sophisticated for its day, was well suited to the task.

They had reached Darwin 40 days after leaving Oakland. Possibly to save weight for the long over-water legs to come, they had then unloaded their



parachutes. Should they strike trouble over water they had decided their only hope was to ditch.

From Darwin it was a short hop over to Lae. New Guinea was the departing point for the most grueling leg of the flight — nearly 4600 kilometres over water to Howland Island, the longest ocean crossing ever attempted. Their destination was a speck of sand and coral in mid-Pacific, 2.5 kilometres long and just under a kilometre wide. The Lockheed was to be the first aircraft to land on its newly constructed airstrip.

Even with a first class navigator on board it would be an incredible feat to find the island by celestial navigation and dead reckoning alone. With an error of only one degree in heading they would miss the island by 72 kilometres. Thus it was that the US government stationed the fleet tug *Ontario* half way along their route and the Coast Guard cutter *Itasca* at Howland. Besides voice communication radios, the *Itasca* had a radio direction finder and a radio beacon that could

be picked up by the aircraft's Bendix radio compass. Once the Lockheed got to within a few hundred kilometres of the island, the *Itasca* could guide them in. Or so it seemed.

Long has combed every detail of the planning of this leg. He believes his experience as a navigator and his exact knowledge of the performance of the various radio and navigation equipment hold the key to the mystery. Every entry in the radio logs of the stations the flyers called, every detail of the weather forecast, the exact wording of every radio message, the relative loudness of Amelia Earhart's broadcasts, even the time that the vital direction finding equipment was turned on, all contain vital clues to the experienced investigator. From a mass of small and seemingly unimportant detail, plus his ability to put himself in the 'pilot's seat', Long, over the years, has painstakingly plotted the last 20 hours of the *Electra's* flight.

For 2160 kilometres after leaving Lae on July 2, *Electra* KHAQQ reported by radio on schedule every 30 minutes to operators in New Guinea. Four hours out the weather deteriorated and they encountered increased headwinds. But the flyers were not concerned. All was going well and the aircraft's Wasp engines were operating perfectly.

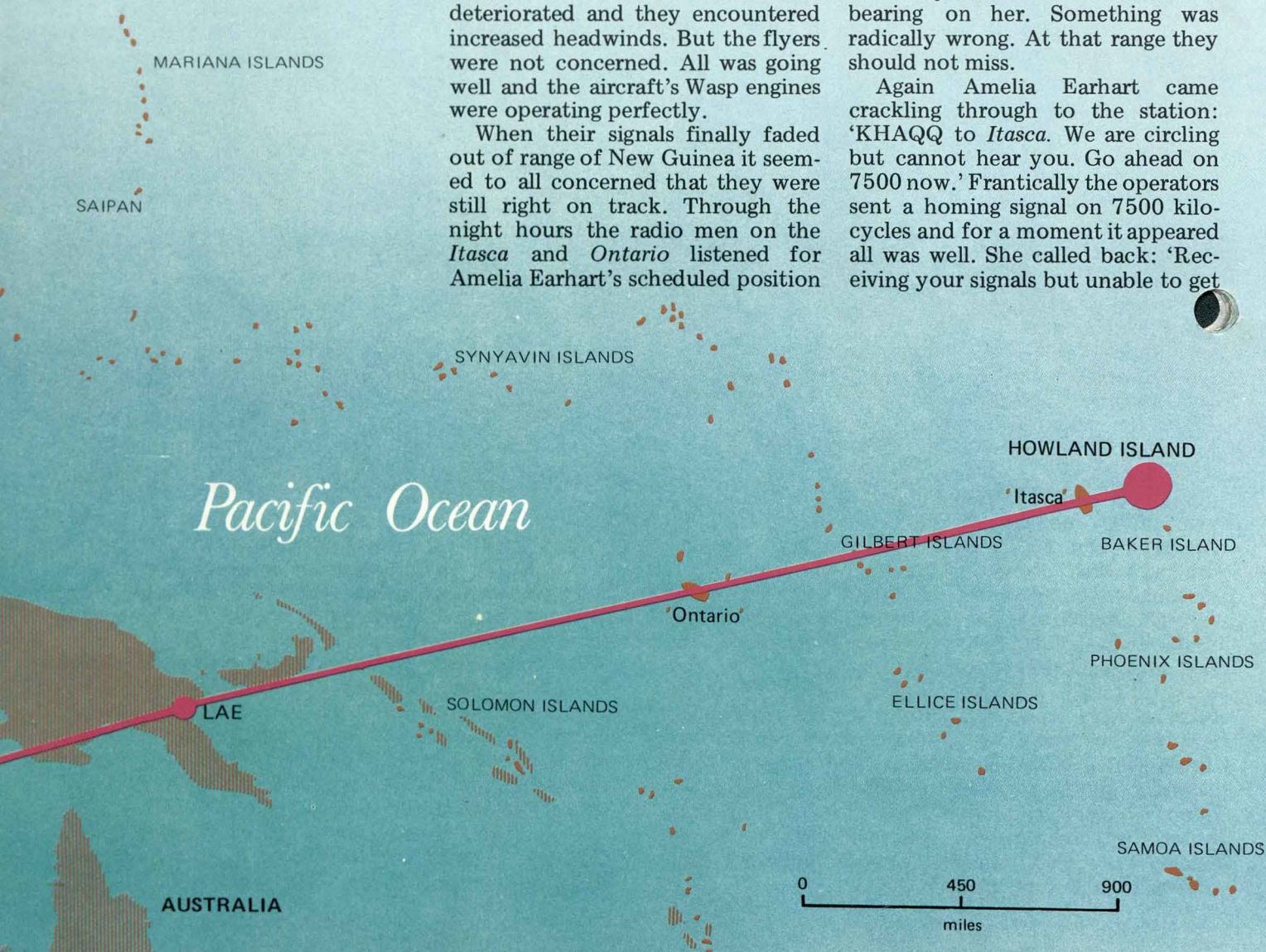
When their signals finally faded out of range of New Guinea it seemed to all concerned that they were still right on track. Through the night hours the radio men on the *Itasca* and *Ontario* listened for Amelia Earhart's scheduled position

reports. But heavy static interference on the radio waves made reception impossible. But they continued to call her and passed weather information every half hour.

At 2.45am her voice broke through for a moment. The only intelligible words were 'cloudy and overcast'. Spirits soared. The flyers were okay and coming in. With renewed effort, the operators on the *Itasca* started broadcasting homing signals for the aviators to pick up on their radio compass. Another hour went by. Nothing was heard. No one was greatly concerned for at this stage the aircraft was still about 1350 kilometres out and at extreme radio range.

At 7.42am she called again: 'We must be right on top of you but cannot see you. Our gas is running low. Have been unable to reach you by radio . . . We are flying at altitude 1000 feet. Please take a bearing. The cutter acknowledged immediately and transmitted a homing signal. They made several calls in the next 10 minutes but again the *Electra* was not receiving them. And still they were unable to take a bearing on her. Something was radically wrong. At that range they should not miss.

Again Amelia Earhart came crackling through to the station: 'KHAQQ to *Itasca*. We are circling but cannot hear you. Go ahead on 7500 now.' Frantically the operators sent a homing signal on 7500 kilocycles and for a moment it appeared all was well. She called back: 'Receiving your signals but unable to get



a minimum . . . Please take a bearing on us.' For the aircraft's radio compass to get a bearing its loop aerial had to be turned so it received a minimum or silent signal — rather like turning a small transistor radio in the hand and lining it up with a broadcast station to get the best reception.

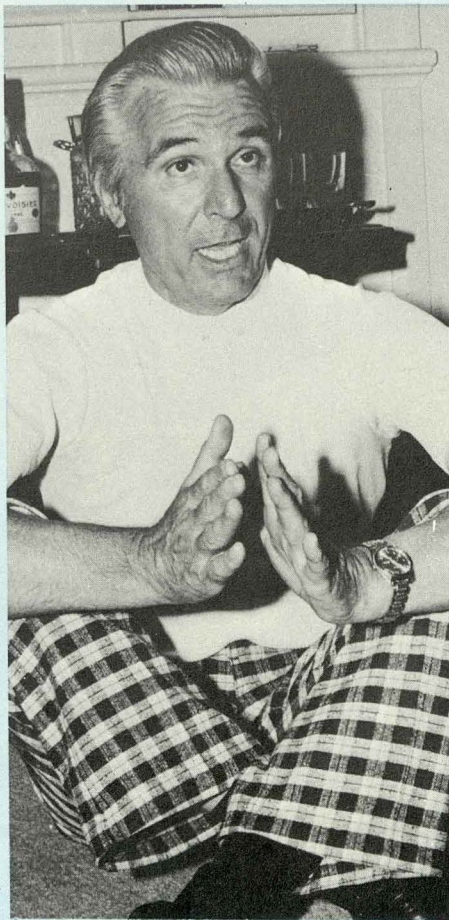
The direction finder crew on the *Itasca* were utterly bewildered. With Earhart transmitting into her mike they were still unable to pick her direction. It was 8.00am and the Lockheed had been airborne 20 hours. It was obvious that the confused flyers were close by, circling, and attempting to use their radio compass to home on the *Itasca*. By Noonan's calculations they must have been within spitting distance of Howland. But they were unable to see the small twist of sand, possibly because it rose only a few feet above water level. Their job may have been made more difficult by the fact that, at their low altitude, they may have been searching directly into the early sun, low on the horizon.

Increasing static again suffocated all radio calls until 8.45am when Amelia Earhart's urgent final message broke through. The operators reported later it was so loud she must have been almost overhead. From it they deduced that the Lockheed was flying a zig zag search pattern north and south of the 157—337 degree position line. Apparently they had finally picked up a bearing on the *Itasca* on their Bendix.

It was either inaccurate or, more probably, too late for them to reach the island before running out of fuel. Nothing more was heard. Soon the message went out to the world — 'Amelia Earhart is missing'.

Within hours a fleet of US Naval search ships set out from Pearl Harbour and San Diego. It was several days before they reached the area. The Lockheed Aircraft Company was confident that with empty fuel tanks and fuel cocks closed, the aircraft would float indefinitely. It was equipped with a liferaft, life-jackets, flares, emergency food and water. There was every reason to believe that the flyers were still alive.

A stunned America listened to radio news. Within hours hopes soared. Three naval radio operators picked up a garbled message in morse code: 'Can't last much longer. Plane is sinking . . .' Amateur radio operators all over the Pacific tuned



Captain Elgin Long. 'The area we need to search has relatively shallow water and a flat sea bed . . .'

in and listened day and night for more calls. A number of ragged and indecipherable signals were received. Then, after hours of strained listening into their headphones a coherent message came through: '281 N.Howland call KHAQQ . . . don't hold with us much longer . . . above water . . . shut off.' Over the next few days a series of messages came through indicating that the pair had crash-landed on a reef and were alive and well.

From the outset experts were sceptical as to how the flyers could operate a radio from the downed aircraft. Then as the 'signals' continued it became obvious to the searchers that they were the work of hoaxers.

The search was interrupted after several days when violent storms hit the area. Squalls whipped up tremendous seas. It was unlikely that a floating aircraft could have survived the onslaught.

After 16 days the search was called off. Ten ships, 62 aircraft and 4,000 men had covered the area of 650,000 square kilometres embracing Howland, the Gilbert and the Marshall islands. No oil slick was sighted.

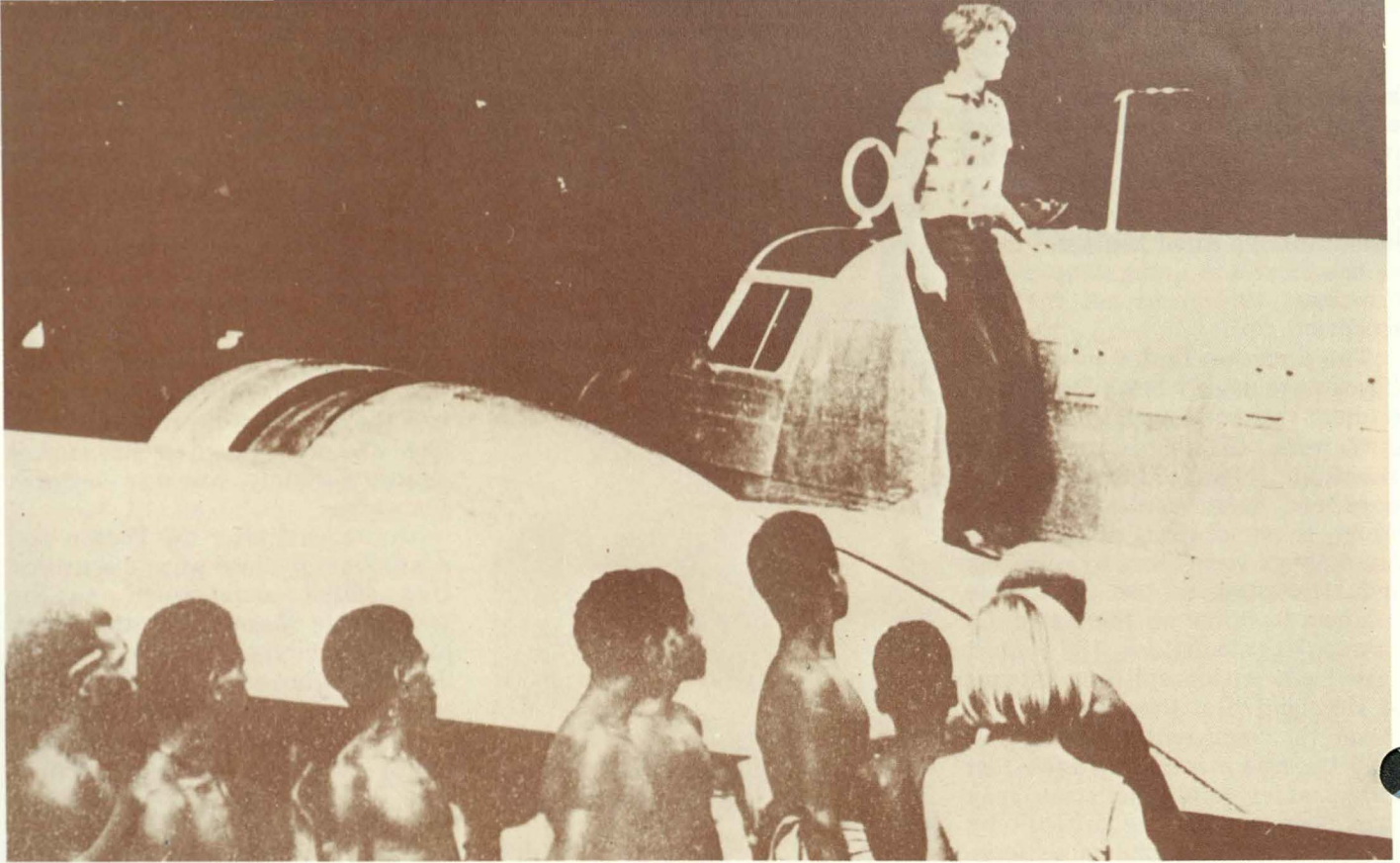
Surprisingly, the one vessel capable of mounting an immediate search was not allowed to go to the search area. The *Itasca* had set out within hours but was recalled by Washington to hold at Howland and act as a tender for seaplanes joining the search. The planes were delayed several days by storms. When the *Itasca* was finally released to join the search, eight days had passed and so had the violent storms. If the Lockheed had come down in that area, it almost certainly was now beneath the waves.

During and after the Pacific War a number of clues were discovered that added some weight to the fashionable theory that the flyers had in fact been picked up by the Japanese who, even before the war, were known to be building facilities in nearby islands. Island eyewitnesses by the dozen testified that they had seen the two Americans in custody on Saipan. Others said they had seen them crash-land. Some said they had seen them executed as American spies. US troops found photographs of Amelia Earhart on captured or killed Japanese. Exhaustive enquiries failed to verify any of the claims. The Japanese disclaimed any knowledge of their fate. They do today.

Long has studied every scrap of worthwhile evidence, official and unofficial. He has interviewed scores of people involved in the drama. In doing so he has been able to discount many theories — fashionable, bizarre, some possible — that have been advanced by a host of writers and amateur researchers.

The best documented theory was that the aircraft had been seen to crash-land near Saipan. Long points out that for them to have landed there, the flyers would have been 100 degrees off course — an impossible error for even an amateur navigator let alone one as experienced as Fred Noonan. Further, they would not have been able to talk with the *Itasca*. Saipan is 3240 kilometres due north of Lae; Howland lies 4600 kilometres due east.

According to Long, a vital key to the Electra's probable position lies with the radio equipment itself. For years, specialists have been puzzled as to why, if the flyers were so close to Howland, the *Itasca* could not lock on their direction-finding equipment. The belief that they must have been out of *Itasca*'s range had tended to indicate that they



Amelia Earhart and Lockheed Electra at Lae, Morobe Province, before her flight into oblivion

had missed the island by a long way.

Captain Long now believes he has been able to establish the real reason. On the night the *Itasca's* radio men commenced listening for the Lockheed they decided to turn the direction-finding equipment on well before the aircraft was likely to be in range. Just to be on the safe side, maybe. When the flyers did eventually come within effective range, because of the atmospheric interference on the radio, the direction-finder was useless. Being only a portable set, it was battery powered. Long believes that the batteries, drained by use through the night, were already too flat for effective operation. Thus the equipment considered vital to their flight to Howland was rendered useless by over-enthusiasm and unfortunate ignorance.

Long has received help from manufacturers of aircraft radio equipment. Similar sets have been carefully tested. By methodically setting up a series of tests simulating the situation over Howland in 1937, taking into account weather conditions, position, terrain, time of day, aircraft altitude, the performance of the *Itasca's* receivers, and the known range of the radio itself, it has been possible to estimate the maximum distance from the Lockheed to the ship when the final messages were received.

From this information plus other factors of known track and the details passed in Amelia Earhart's final messages, a small area of probability has been deduced, an area, Long is confident, less than 60 kilometres in diameter and close to Howland Island.

On his recent fact-finding trip he gained more information to confirm his findings. From Wing Commander Stanley Rose of Sydney he was able to confirm that Earhart's radios were working well on leaving Darwin. They had been unserviceable on arrival and Stanley Rose had worked on them himself.

Bob Ireland, the Vacuum Oil rep at Lae in 1937, gave Long details of the Lockheed's fuel and oil state on departure for Howland. The enquiring American even spoke with Mrs Flora Stewart, then hostess at their hotel in Lae, to check small details of Earhart's and Noonan's stay. He also looked up a score of eyewitnesses to her final take-off.

Captain Long is now putting the finishing touches to a factual and documented book on his findings. To gain sufficient support for the planned search, he must first convince interested parties that he has done his homework and his is not just another crank theory. He estimates the search could cost around K500,000.

'The area we need to search has

relatively shallow water and a flat sea bed,' he says. 'Aircraft equipped with magnetometers should easily locate any large metal object on the bottom.' It is generally accepted that because it is under water the all-metal aircraft will be well preserved. Once found, Captain Long has already a plan for raising the wreckage. He hopes to use robot salvage equipment similar to that used to raise wreckage from the US Navy nuclear submarine *Thresher* which sank in deep water some years back.

A few hours with Captain Elgi Long is enough to convince the sceptic that he is no crank with another wild scheme. He has proved his credentials as a pilot, navigator, investigator. To add to this impressive list he became, in 1971, the first man to fly around the world via the North and South Poles. He took 24 years to plan and achieve that dream. Now he stands at the threshold of the final chapter of his greatest dream: to find the missing Lockheed Electra HKAQQ — and finally solve the fate of Amelia Earhart and Fred Noonan. — *Terry Gwynn-Jones is a pilot and is an Australian Department of Transport examiner of airmen.*



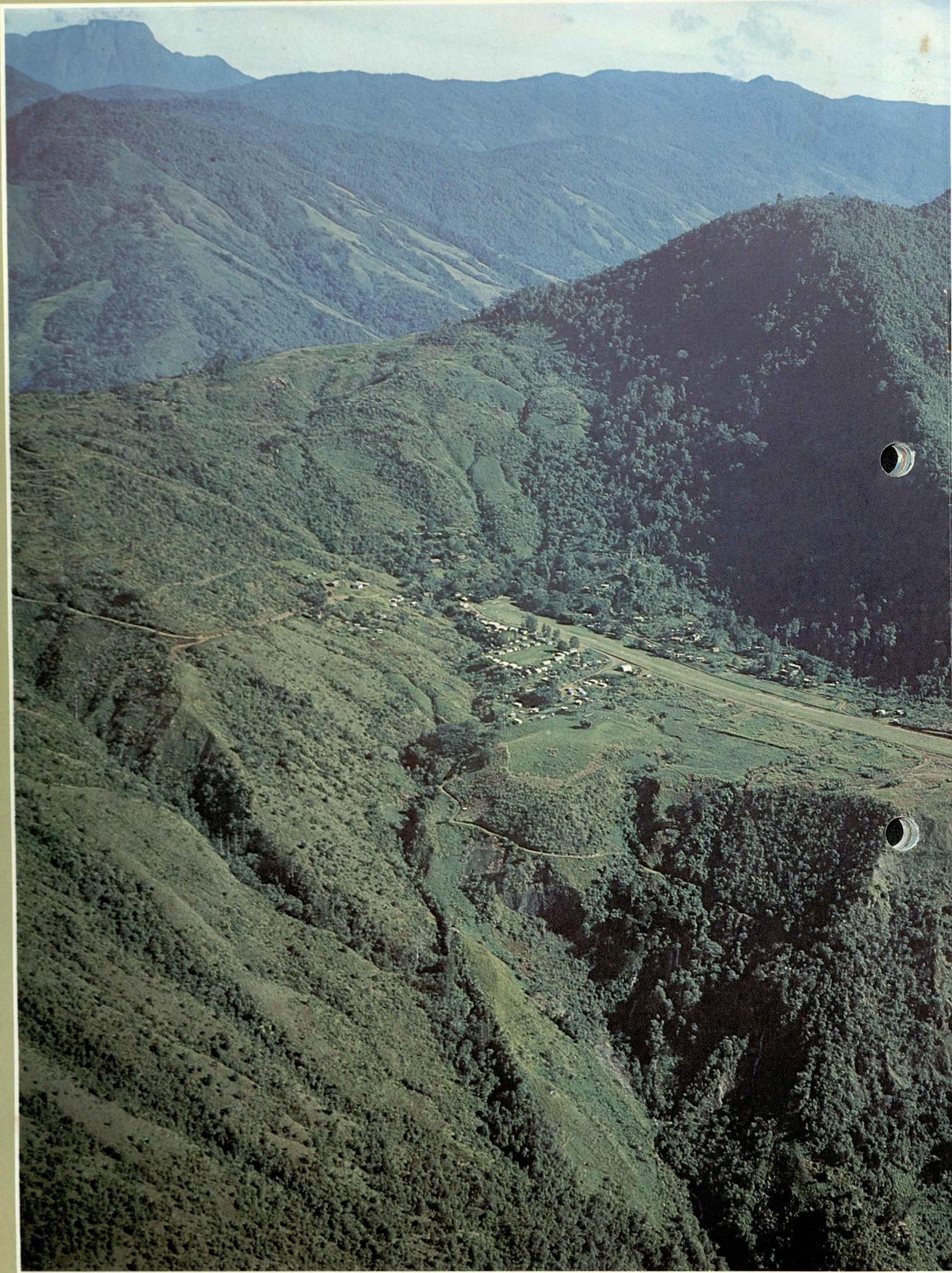
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Right: *On the way to Nago;*
below: *slash and gut, slash and gut . . .*



YUMI GO NAGO

Story: Biga Lebasi
Photographs: William Peckover

'*Planti fis, you bai?*' the Japanese fisherman shouts to the market crowds. His shabby and rusting vessel is still putt-putting. He throws in an anchor. It splashes a village woman tugging a tuna by the tail.

Islanders, lips betelnut-stained, swarm around to buy . . . or just to peer out of curiosity. This is the Kavieng market scene — betelnuts, bananas, pawpaws, fish, mud crabs, yams, a couple of live and flapping *kakaruks* (chickens), coconuts — and people. Prices at the market are cheap and produce is in abundance.

'*Wantok,*' I call in pidgin. The Japanese fisherman grins. '*Yu mi go kamera kisim piksa . . . planti piksa long fis fektri long Nago Ailan?*' I plead. The Japanese nods agreeably, I think. '*Hau long yu laik stap long ailan?*' he asks. '*Wanpela aua — emi orait?*' I suggest. With more nodd-ing, he assures me that's fine.

My trip to beautiful Nago Island is almost ready to start. '*Sel fis finis. Yumi go,*' promises the Japanese as he reaches into the hold and starts chucking out tuna onto the slippery rocks and pebbles.

Several tuna land in a shallow pool. Blood. Deep red tuna blood. Tiny coloured fish feed on it. They disappear suddenly into crevices . . . A brown and white eel has just taken command in the pool. A six-year old New Ireland urchin throws a stone. It misses the eel. Hits a tuna.

Laughter galore. The Japanese laughs too but not appreciating the joke. '*Mi sel fis. Yumi go, eh?*' he repeats as he dishes out cigarettes . . . A Japanese brand of course.

A child dawdles up, collects five loose cigarettes. '*Yu smok, no?*' the Japanese asks. '*Nogat. Em bilong papa ia,*' the boy retorts with a cheeky grin. He runs off into the swelling market crowd.

The engine putts. Then groans. And putts again. We're on our way to Nago. The vessel picks up speed as it breaks the peaceful, calm blue waters of Kavieng. The wake spreads. Village fishermen, perched on canoes, rock as it hits their outriggers.

One of the villagers waves — and nearly topples overboard. We laugh and exchange greetings in pidgin. '*Mi Yoshi. Mi kam Okinawa,*' he says. Brief introductions. Silence . . . except for the putt-putting.

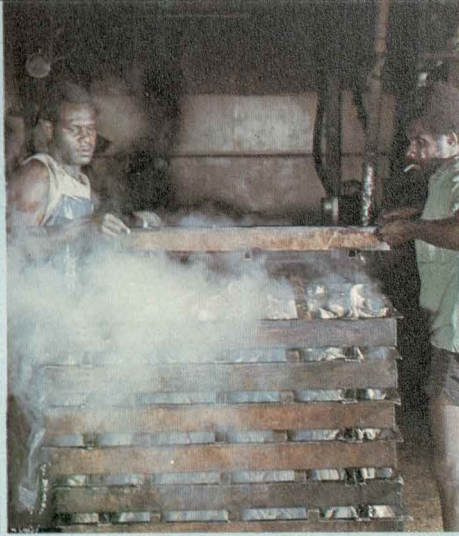
A school of dolphins surfaces and starts racing us. Flying fish dart here and there. Down memory lane. Reminiscences of the Sandringham . . . the Catalina that used to fly between Port Moresby and Samarai . . . Was it once a week they flew in with the mail? . . . It must have been. Ancient. But they're a part of Papua New Guinea's aviation history. More flying fish dart, trailing fine wisps of spray.

We approach Nago. The morning sun beats down making the white

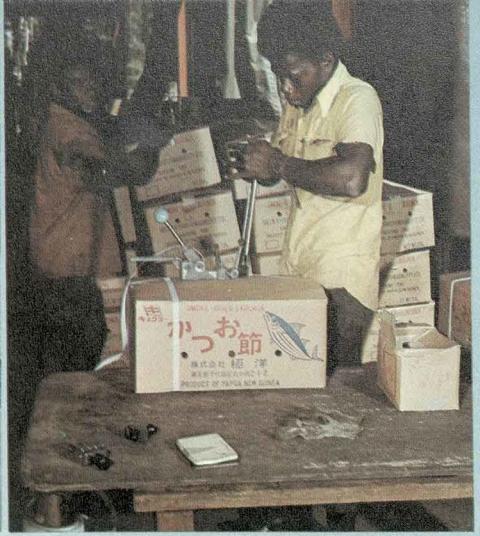




Ready for cooking . . .



. . . ready for smoking . . .



. . . packing for export

beach that surrounds the island all a dazzle. Casuarinas and coconut palms tower over the island. Another picture of home. Well? Dream . . . Kavieng is home away from home.

Off the boat and onto the jetty. We meander under the casuarinas and coconuts. Beautiful, but why build a factory on this specimen of paradise? The stench hits me. Then comes that fishy smell — of bloody skipjack tuna.

We enter the Gollin Kyokuyo (Niugini) Pty Ltd smoke-dried tuna factory. Yes, literally, it's bloody. All that slash and gut, slash and gut, slash and gut — and more slash and gut. Blood squirts and oozes out from the dozens of tuna that flash through the slash-and-gut process. From this to cooking they go through the filleting process. Then into trays and into automated drying machines where smoking goes on for about 48 to 50 hours.

The finished product, now with a pleasant odour, is packed into cardboard cartons and sealed. Ready for shipment to Japan. What is not smoked is sold to the west coast of the United States, Pago Pago (American Samoa) and Puerto Rico, for canning.

About 30 per cent of fish caught is smoked-dried and exported to Japan where it is scraped into tiny bits and pieces from which soup is made for the millions of diners who crowd into posh hotels and restaurants. Such as the 393-room Hotel Hayashida Onsen, a 90-minute drive

from Kagoshima, in the centre of Kirishima National Park, or Tokyo's Hotel Okura. And hundreds of 'eateries' around Tokyo's glittering neon-lit Ginza Strip and Roppongi area.

Gollin Kyokuyo has 15 fish catching vessels and two reefers or mother ships. Fish caught by the catchers are loaded into giant deep freezers for shipment to the Nago factory. The factory was set up in 1970 under a joint-venture between the Australian and Japanese governments. The company of course, provides the expertise.

It employs about 280 Japanese fishermen and fishing experts. About 190 Papua New Guinean trainees learn the job as they go. Most training is done this way but every now and then a group of Papua New Guineans goes to do special courses at the National Nautical School in Madang.

The Japanese call smoke-dried tuna *katsuobushi* (*katsu* — tuna; *obushi* — smoke-dried). Gollin Kyokuyo manager Bob McKay, reports that the company is producing 60 to 70 tons of smoke-dried fish each week. 'When the smoke-dried tuna reaches a restaurant it is scraped into thin pieces — like wood shavings — and made into soup for the hungry at home and in hotels and motels. All the scrap from the factory is ground into fishmeal. This is shipped to Lae and used for pig and poultry feed. The skin of the belly is prepared and sold locally around New Ireland at 50 toea a pound. And it's popular.'

Bob says not all the Japanese em-

ployed by the firm are experts. 'No, I wouldn't call all of them experts at all. Proficient would be the best term to describe most of them. There are experts here but they number only 20 to 30.'

Papua New Guinean trainees, he says have a long way to go to catch up with their Japanese counterparts' know-how. 'The real experts,' Bob says, 'are those who are 60 to 70 years old. You must have seen one of them. You should see them walking. Correction. They don't walk. They rock from side to side just like their boats do out in the ocean. They're always at sea whether on land or in boats.'

Up I clamber on to a sick catcher. Its engine is damaged. The company is waiting for spare parts, perhaps a brand new engine, from Japan. The crew is lazing around — fishing with small lines, playing cards, or just idly sipping black tea.

Yoshi and I board our *liklik* boat. About a mile away is a reefer chugging in with its fresh cargo. We reach the jetty at Bagail on the New Ireland mainland. '*Domo aregato gozaimasu,*' I say to Yoshi, '*Sayonara*'. Yoshi grins. He says goodbye in a pidgin accent which I have come to understand. The grin on his face widens into a smile, spreads from ear to ear. Yoshi's got more gold teeth than natural ones. I walk up the rickety jetty.

Goodbye Yoshi. 'Bye Nago. The Fokker Friendship taxis. We're airborne. From my window seat I peer down. Goodbye New Ireland in the sun. — *Biga Lebasi* is editor of *Air Niugini's* staff magazine Balus Tok Tok.

BENSBACH



The barramundi are slowly making their way back up the Bensbach River in Western Province. It's about this time each year — November — that the wet season begins to turn this southwestern corner of Papua New Guinea's largest and most sparsely populated province into an island-studded lake. And the barramundi move in along the tortuous

Story: Bob Hawkins
Photographs: Neville Moderate

channel of the Bensbach River before being lifted by flood waters out over the river banks to roam freely across hundreds of square kilometres of the saucer-like flood plains. From now until July, perhaps even late August, the wilderness

around lonely Bensbach Lodge will be an angler's paradise.

Because I was unlucky enough to have to visit Bensbach in September, when the river is reduced to a lazy but still powerfully meandering flow to the sea, there was nary a barramundi in it to attack my lonely lure. But there are too many tales of biting barramundi galore — and the



30 kg of frozen evidence that Lodge manager Brian Brumley playfully plonked onto the dinner table — for me to say ‘I saw no barras, therefore there are no barras.’

But Bensbach is not simply barra country. Roaming the plains are thousands — some estimate as many as 100,000 — deer, descendants of small herds of rusa deer introduced near Merauke, across the border in West Irian, by the colonial Dutch in two batches in 1913 and 1920. In the scrub — rarely seen on the open plains during the day — are hundreds of wild pigs. Wallabies — in uncountable numbers — are everywhere. And among them all roams a variety of wild dogs — some with dingo blood — which, along with a still viable population of fresh and salt water crocodiles, provide the predatory element to keep deer and wallaby numbers down to a level at which they can find enough fodder not to starve during high flood times.

So much for the variety of fishy and four-footed fauna. You haven't seen anything yet. In a De Havilland River Truck journey downstream from the Lodge — just over 30 kilometres as the crow flies but more than 100 by river from the sea — we saw, within two hours, hundreds of pelicans, thousands of mangrove herons, dancing brolgas,

lanky jabiru storks stalking the shallows before lazily wafting aloft to ride the thermals until to the eye they may as well have been sparrows, sea and New Guinea eagles, hawks, kites, snipe, quail, ducks, owls, egrets — greater and lesser, magpie geese aloft, cormorants, wag-tails . . . And then there were those I didn't see at all but which Brian Brumley assured me were around such as lily hoppers, cassowaries, giant bustards or bush turkeys, whiskered tern, black bitterns, mopokes, plovers, pied herons, ibises . . . And I've forgotten to tell you about the goannas, which seem to spend half their lives swimming the Bensbach, on the surface, as opposed to the crocs which were frequently plopping into the water ahead of us leaving nothing more than a muddy patch in the water and perhaps a trail of bubbles; and the turtles whose disappearing noses at times were so prolific one got the impression of raindrops splattering the river surface.

Meanwhile, back at the Lodge, in the loving hands of Doreen Brumley, were blind Basil, and Susan and Boi, tame wallabies, who would feel something had gone tragically amiss if there weren't a morning and afternoon bottle of milk awaiting them.

Shooting for ducks or deer is not



allowed within eight kilometres of the Lodge. Several deer have made themselves at home on the neck of land, looped by the river, on which the Lodge stands. Gunfire could frighten them. And hefty Henry the pig, who thinks he's a dog, might fall victim to the over-eager hunter — even though pigs are protected. In fact, Brian Brumley says that if the fauna ever begin to show fear shooting could be stopped.

For hunters visiting Bensbach Lodge, advance knowledge of the rules will help. The game which abounds in the region all comes under the Tonda Wildlife Manage-



ment Area and to shoot either deer or ducks and to catch fish it is necessary to purchase a licence. (All other fauna is protected.) A licence for each is K2. On top of that comes royalties. A licence lasts only two weeks and during that time the hunter can take only five deer or five ducks. Royalties, payable in advance, on deer are K15 for the first, K20 for the second, K30 for the third, K50 for the fourth and K60 for the fifth. For ducks it is K2 a bird. The bounty on fish is K0.30 per kilogram of headed and gutted fish. Hunters must be accompanied by a guide who holds

customary rights in the management area, they cannot use nets to fish nor can they hunt from a vehicle or vessel, moving or stationary.

Fifty per cent of royalties are paid to the owners of the land on which fauna are taken and the balance is held in a trust fund for the people of the area, who, on a recent count, number less than one per square mile.

Perhaps, as a final hint that you shouldn't go out alone at Bensbach, it is worth recalling Brian Brumley's words in answer to my question 'Where are we?' after 2½ hours of downstream motoring. 'I don't

know, it's a good job we've got the river to find the Lodge for us,' he said. — *Bob Hawkins, an Australian Information Service journalist, is Counsellor (Information) at the Australian High Commission, Port Moresby. Neville Moderate is Chief Photographer with the PNG Office of Information.*



POLISHED BRASS

Story: Don Hook

Photographs: David Callard

From a small group of musically-minded Tolai schoolboys at a village near Rabaul, to one of the world's top brass bands — that's the story of the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary.

In 1935 a former British Army bandsman, the late Inspector David Crawley, joined the old New Guinea Police Force at Rabaul. He soon noticed the musical talents of the young Tolais. He was so impressed that he sought permission to form a police band but his request was rejected by his superiors because it was considered 'impossible to teach music to the native people'.

But David Crawley persevered. He bought his own brass band instruments and in his spare time he

taught the children of Nordup village how to play. Their first public appearance so impressed the then Administrator of New Guinea that he recommended that David Crawley be released from regular duties to form a police band.

A full set of instruments was bought from Australia and the police band was officially formed in 1938. Some of the original 'Nordup boys' went on to hold senior rank in the constabulary.

In January 1942, when Japan invaded Rabaul, the bandmen buried their inst-



truments at Toliap village and disbanded. Some went home to their villages while others accompanied Crawley on his escape from New Britain.

In 1943, a new police band was formed in Port Moresby and by 1945 most of the original band were back with Inspector Crawley. In March, of that year, the Commander of the Australian Forces, General Blamey, requested that the band be sent to Australia to support the Government's Third Victory Loan. This tour was the first of many undertaken by the band — Sydney Anzac Day March in 1950, Royal visits to Canberra in 1954 and Darwin in 1963, the Melbourne Olympic Games in 1956, the Royal Easter Show in Sydney and more recently the 1977 Tasmania Military Tattoo.

Next year, the band has been invited to take part in the Edinburgh Festival. Invitations have also been received to perform at the Colchester Military Tattoo and the Royal Tournament in London.

After the Pacific War, Inspector Crawley introduced the bandmen to the study of music theory through

the Trinity College of Music, London. Many passed their examinations with honours and distinctions.

By the time David Crawley left Papua New Guinea in 1963 he had been honoured by the Queen with the MBE, and by his peers with the Silver Medal of the Worshipful Company of Musicians in London in recognition of his 'skill and enthusiasm' in forming brass bands in Papua New Guinea. The award is given annually for the most outstanding musical work of the year and it was the first time the honour had gone outside the United Kingdom.

Sergeant Major Tolek, one of the original 'Nordup boys', took charge of the band until the arrival in 1964 of the present Director of Music, Chief Inspector Tom Shacklady.

Shacklady brought with him 30 years experience in military bands — the Royal Marine Band from 1935-1948, the Durham Light Infantry 1948-1951, and the Australian Army from 1951-1964. He was born in Chester-le-Street, County Durham, and has been with bands as long as he can remember. 'In my young days everybody in the north

of England played in a brass band.'

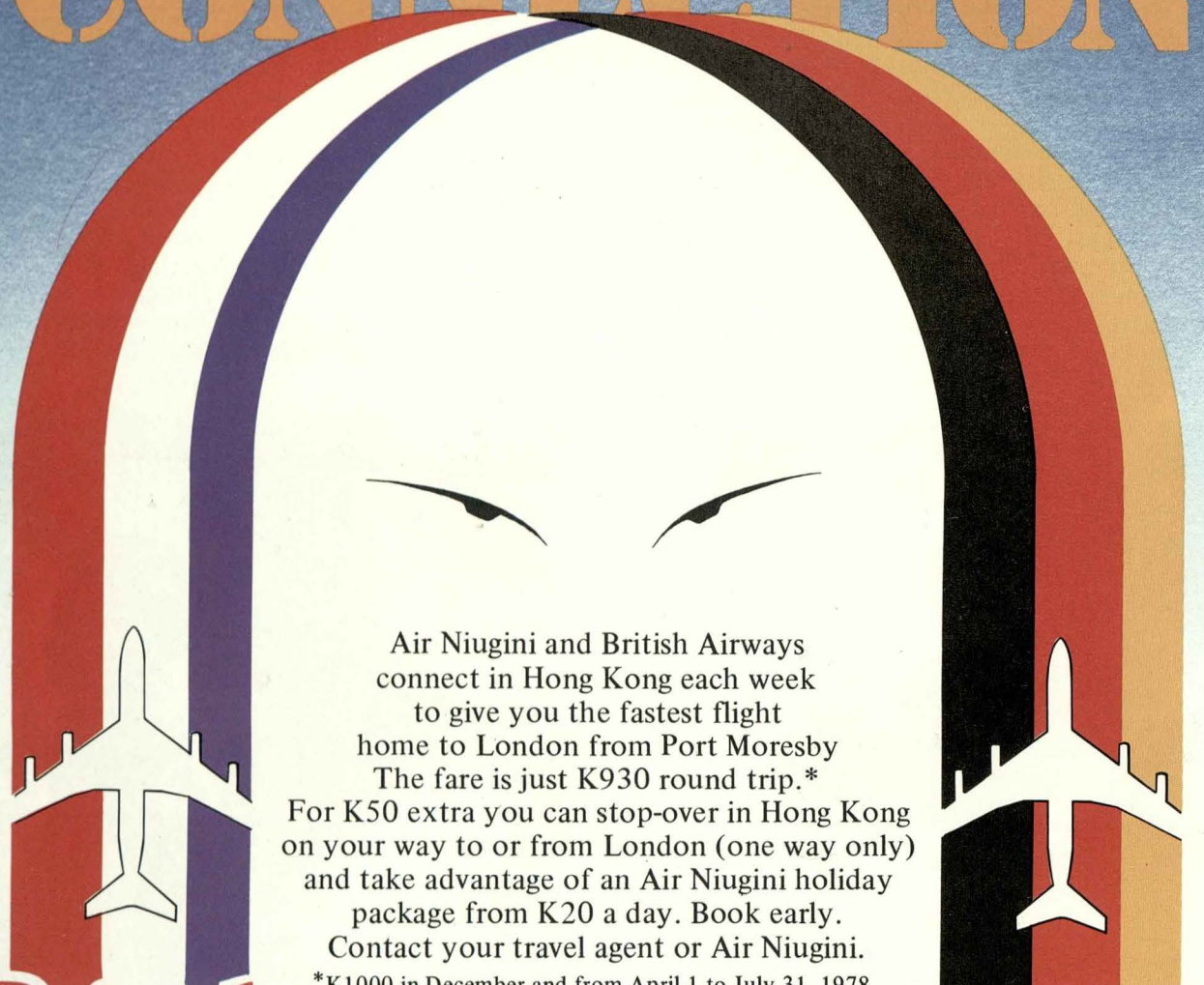
Under Chief Inspector Shacklady, the band has continued to progress. It has a repertoire of some 2,000 pieces of music, classical and modern, and is keenly sought after to play at national functions as well as giving regular concerts for members of the public and for tourists.

New instruments are now being introduced including the oboe, bassoon, bass and alto clarinets. Chief Inspector Shacklady believes these instruments are essential to the eventual formation of a National Orchestra.

In fact, he says that such an orchestra could well be a reality within the next 10 years. The Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary Band already has all the brass, woodwind and percussion instruments used in the modern symphony orchestra. And when a National Orchestra is formed, it will be an appropriate tribute to the late David Crawley and his 'Nordup boys'. — *Don Hook is the Australian Broadcasting Commission's senior man in Papua New Guinea.*



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Above: Face to face, the *Kata* dancers stamp, prance and leap as they try to dislodge their painful burdens and achieve spiritual greatness; below: fibres threaded through holes in an initiate's neck

Dance of the sea eagles

Story and photographs: Geoffrey Heard

The tension is almost a concrete thing as the two dancers, face to face and only a few centimetres apart, prance in a circle. Stamp, stamp, stamp, go their feet on the ground. Then they leap, and leap again, and the brightly patterned and befeathered yokes, fastened by fibres to the flesh of their necks, bounce high and slam down. The back of your own neck twitches in sympathy.

Then they leap again, and there is an audible sigh of relief from a section of the crowd as the fibres holding one man's yoke snap, and it falls to the ground. The dancer

prances away—free, but the relief is only momentary. One dancer has been freed from his yoke in this the *Kata* ceremony, and his spirit is now free to soar with the sea eagles.

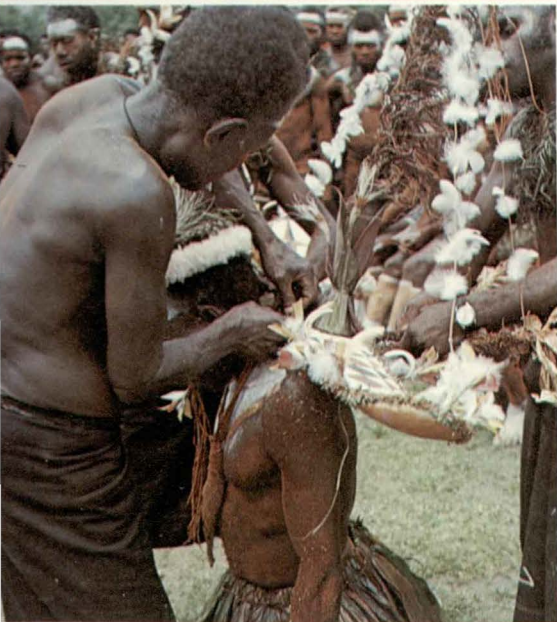
Tension builds again as the other dancer prances and leaps in desperation. His yoke bounces and bumps, pulling agonisingly at the flesh of his neck. His freed friend returns and dances with him, encouraging him. It is no use. The second dancer tires, and as the likelihood of him dislodging his yoke diminishes with his failing leaps, the women of his family break into a heart-rending

mourning wail, as for one already dead.

And traditionally, the dancer who fails to dislodge the yoke in *Kata* would be dead. Happily, that is not the case here. The unsuccessful dancer kneels before the elders, his head hanging dispiritedly. An old man steps forward, and with a slap, snaps the fibres and sends the yoke flying.

The dancer is still alive, but his spirit will never soar with the sea eagles, master of the waves and the wind, the twin forces which dominate the lives of these islanders.

The *Kata* is one of the many



Top: The dancer takes the weight of the yoke and bites the 'bullet' of ginger and feathers; above left: tying on the yoke; above right: a friend supports the yoke before the dance starts

ceremonies and dances which are reappearing, some of them after not being seen for decades, at the local 'folk culture' festivals which are mushrooming throughout Papua New Guinea.

Some have established themselves as annual events, such as Rabaul's Tolai Warwagira, where the *Kata* was performed, which has become a regular two-week affair in September/October.

Smaller affairs than the world-famous PNG Highlands shows, these festivals are designed primarily as a showcase of local culture for the local people, particularly the young.

They give younger generations, often largely ignorant of their own culture, a chance to see and participate in traditional ceremonies and dances.

The very fact that these festivals are designed by the people for themselves makes them doubly attractive to tourists. It ensures the authenticity of ceremonies, dancing and costuming. In addition, nearly every festival sees the revival of some ancient tradition, not performed perhaps in living memory, but reconstructed now by elders who learnt the traditions by heart as children.

The *Kata* was one. On a sunny Saturday afternoon in Rabaul, I was able to make a record of this dramatic struggle for spiritual greatness in which young men of the Duke of York Islands have, for untold ages, staked their lives on a few brief minutes which can lead them to glory — or oblivion. — *Geoffrey Heard was for several years a journalist with the PNG National Broadcasting Commission.*

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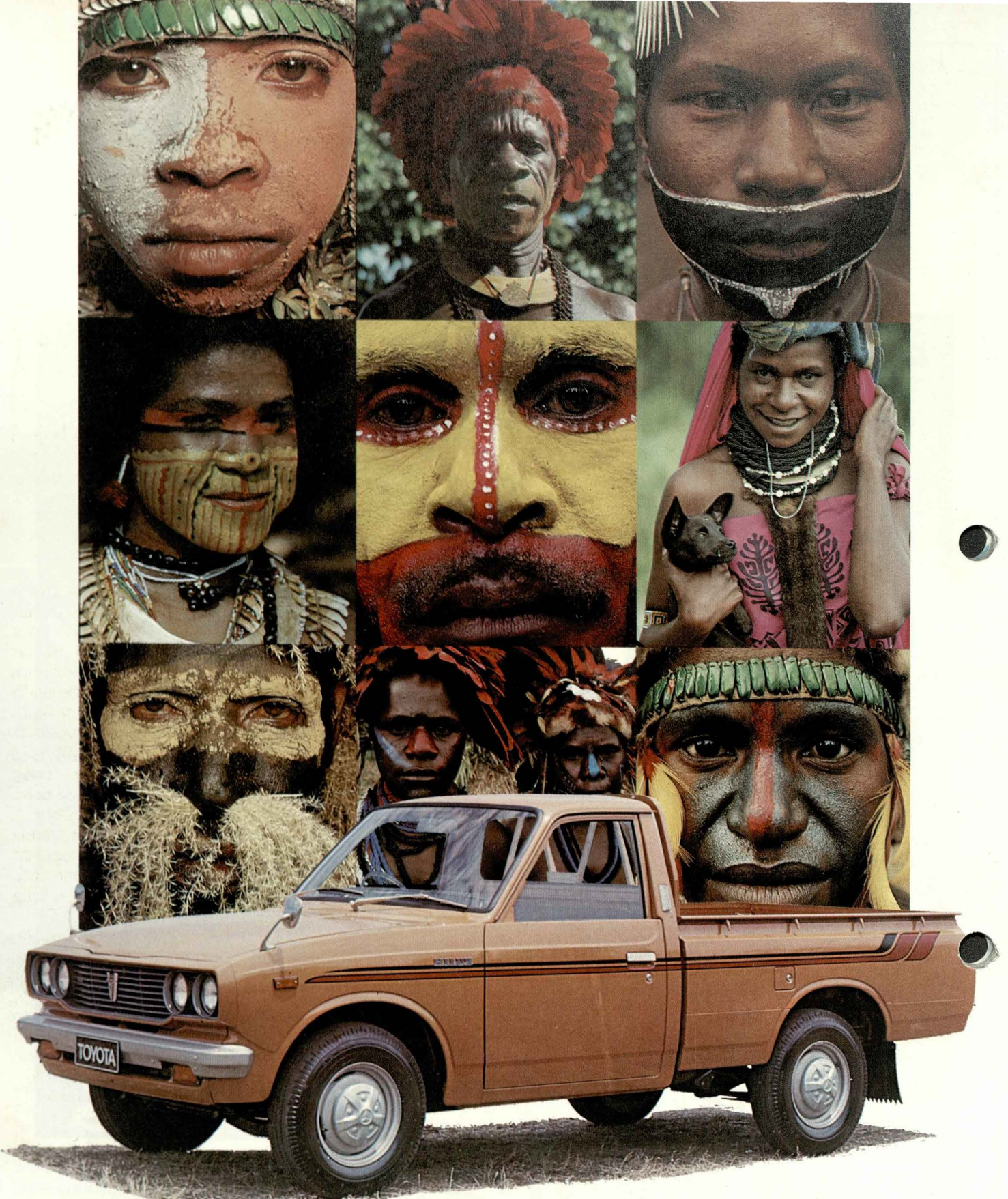
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Potters of Bilibilil

Story and photographs: Brian and Mary Mennis

'Whack, whack, whack.' The sound reverberates around Bilibilil village. The women as they sit under the houses are shaping pots in an age-old process handed down through generations of Bilibilil and Yabob women.

First the clay must be collected from Margui, out in the bush. The women make it an all morning affair and there is much gossiping and laughing. One of them shovels the clay up while the others shape it into large balls which are put in the *bilums* or net bags. At the end of the morning they compete with each other to carry the heaviest *bilums*.

Back at the village, the balls are stored under the houses. When needed they are broken open and small pieces are placed on top of sand and hammered flat with a stone, rather like pastry on a flourboard.

These flaky pieces of clay are then put on a large piece of bark, sprinkled with water and left for at least two days. Again they are pounded, mixed with sand and

water and shaped into a mound of wet clay. After drying for a few days the mixture is now ready for use.

A lump is prised off, kneaded like dough and formed into an oval shape. One finger is inserted in the end and the other hand whisks the clay around shaping the lip of the pot in an astonishingly short time.

Then a *pati* or round stone is used to hammer out the inside shape of the pot and later, when the main tapping job begins, the stone is used as a backstop inside the pot while a thick paddle is used to tap the outside. This makes the whacking sound. It needs expert co-ordination of hand and eye to achieve the finished product and young girls may take up to two years to learn the art.

Once the desired shape has been obtained, the pots are again left to dry for about four days. Then a decoration is painted on the outside

and pots are pre-heated beside a small fire. Meanwhile a trough has been constructed into which is put dry wood with dry coconut fronds underneath. The pots are stacked in this trough and a fire is lit beneath them. The dull brown pots turn to glowing red and are left to cool off.

These days, the pots are still used as part of the bride price in many Madang villages where they are used for cooking daily meals. During a feast the pots are lined up in traditional manner. Firewood is stacked around the pots and lit at one end. Quickly the whole line is cooking merrily.

Pots fetch a high price at the Madang market and pot exchanges are a common sight in the villages of Yabob and Bilibilil when truckloads of inland people arrive and pay for them with food. Pots are still traded up and down the coast but not on the scale of days of old.

In the past the men might be away for two months at a time calling into most of the coastal villages, as far as



Top: Firing pots at Bilibilil; below: the cooling process



Above: Putting the final touches; below: in the market place at Madang

Sio in one direction and Serang and Karkar Island in the other. Now the men make a quick trip to one or two villages and return home. Much of the romance has gone now that coastal vessels are used instead of the large trading canoes. The last big trading trip was in 1934.

The Bilibils now live on the mainland, but in pre-European times they lived on the island of Bilibil, just off the coast. As they did not have enough land for gardens, their whole economy was centred around the pots. Pots bought their food, plates, decorations, the hulls of their large trading canoes and the vines and wood necessary for the superstructures.

It might take 10 men a month to build one of these *balangut* canoes. They had plank sides, a cage for the pots, sheltered accommodation and masts supporting two sails. The trading trips usually took place in May and June and for months before the women would be busy making the pots. The *likon* or sorcerer would be consulted as to the most auspicious departure day because he was reputed to have powers over the elements.

Just before departure time the *garamut* drums would be beaten and the men would carry the canoes into the water. The women would hurry down carrying their pots in *bilums* and load them onto the canoes. The men would then farewell their wives and warn them to behave and work well while they were away. Any playing around and their pots would be jinxed and not sold.

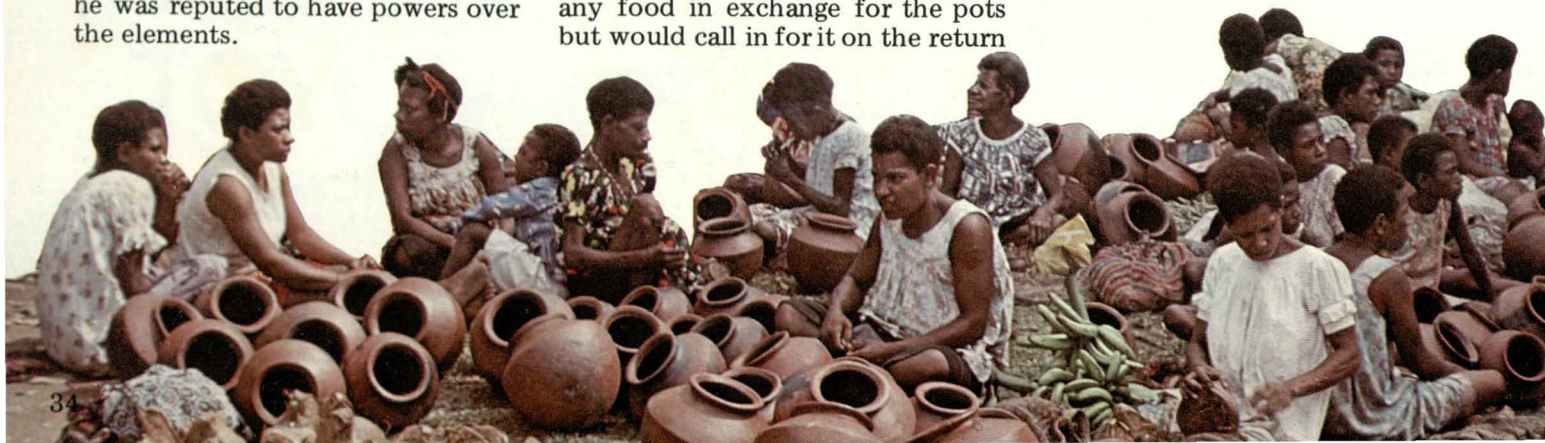
When they climbed on board the men would hit the sides of the canoe with ginger leaves to ward off the *masalai* (evil spirits). Then off they would go with the breeze catching their sails and the red *tanget* decorations fluttering.

As they approached the various villages on the Rai coast they would sound the conch shell and people would come running down to the beach to greet them and pull the canoes high up on the sand. There would be feasting and the Bilibil men would hand over the pots to their trading partners. As it might take two months before they got back to Bilibil, they would not take any food in exchange for the pots but would call in for it on the return

leg. Other items of exchange were pigs' teeth and flat wooden plates.

If one of the canoes was newly built there would be special feasts held to welcome it and the people in each village would say: 'You must stay longer so we can kill a pig and give it to the canoe for it will bring us many pots in the future and will make us happy.'

Meanwhile the women back on Bilibil would keep a lookout for the canoes and as soon as the sails were sighted they would busy themselves with cooking a large meal for the men. Later there would be feasting and dancing. But first the men would describe the voyage to their wives and chide those whose pots were not sold. 'You must have humbugged while we were away. It's all your fault.' As usual the men had the last say — which is not always the case today — *Brian and Mary Mennis are based in Madang.*



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